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REVOLUTIONARY ARMY ORDERS

For the Main Army under Washington. 1778-1779.

(From Originals in the Collection of the Virginia Historical Society.)

[Among the manuscript collections of the Virginia Historical Society are five small volumes somewhat worn and faded, and frequently the writing is difficult to read.

These books were presented to the Society many years ago by the heirs of Col. Charles Dabney, among whose papers they were found.

Charles Dabney was Lieutenant Colonel of the Second Virginia Regiment, and is on the roll as such on June 17th, 1778. He subsequently served as Colonel of a Virginia State Regiment from 1778 to 1781. These orders—none of which have ever been printed—cover the operations of the main army under General Washington nearly throughout the momentous years 1778 and 1779.

From the writing and spelling it is evident that most of them have been copied in the books by persons of very limited education, who have apparently, as far as spelling is concerned, not transcribed the orders correctly. From other sources it is known that many of the persons who issued these orders were better acquainted with the ordinary rules of spelling than those who made

the copies now preserved. It appears from the dates given on the fly leaf of the first volume, that several months in the early part of 1778 are missing from the record.]

REVOLUTIONARY ORDER BOOK—HEADQUARTERS, JAN. 1778 TO HEADQUARTERS, JUNE 3, 1778.

May 3 1778.[1]

Brigadier to morrow Maxwell[2] F. O. Colo Wesson[3] & Maj[r] * * *.

Brigade Major Bannester[4]

The Inspector from Larnards[5]

For Detachment Cololonel Hall & Major Sumner.

In future no Guard in Camp is to be suffered to remain on Duty more than 48 hours without being releived. On Monday next the several Brigades will begin their exercise at Six o'Clock and Continue till 8 O'Clock in the morning and from 5 to 6 O'Clock in the afternoon the men for Guard not to attend the exercise. The Medicine Chests from L[d] Sterlings[6] Devision to be sent to the Yellow Springs immediately to be Refilled by the Apothecary Gen[l]—The Paymaster of the Marqus[7] and Gen[l] Wains Devision are to Call on the P. M. Gen[l] for a months Pay next Monday. Poors[8], Glovers[9] the Barren De Calbs on Tuesday, Weedens[10] Muhlenburgs the Artillery & Maxwells on

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[1] At the date upon which these orders begin the American Army under General Washington was still stationed at Valley Forge where it had passed its famous winter.

On June 18th the British Forces evacuated Philadelphia.

[2] Brigadier William Maxwell of New Jersey.

[3] Col. James Wesson of Massachusetts.

[4] Probably Captain Seth Banister of Massachusetts.

[5] Brigadier General Ebenezer Larned of Massachusetts.

[6] Maj. Gen. William Alexander, commonly called from the Scottish title claimed by him Lord Sterling.

[7] Marquis de la Fayette.

[8] Brigadier General Enoch Poor of New Jersey.

[9] Brigadier General John Glover of Massachusetts.

[10] Brigadier General George Weedon of Virginia.

Wednesday, late Conways, Varnoms[11] & McIntoshes[12] on Thursday.

for Guard . . .	*	*	*
W. Command . .	*	*	*
Muhlenburgs . .	*	*	*

May 4 1778.

A Brigade Court Martial whereof Major * * * is President to set to morrow at the President's Quarters at 10 O'Clock for the Tryal of all the Prisoners in the Brigade. G. O. Brigadier Genl to morrow Waine F. O. Col^o Martin Maj^r Hust. Brigade Major Haskell.[13] The Inspector from Pattersons.[14]

The Sub & Brigade Inspectors are to be pointedly exact in pursueing the writen instructions of the Inspector General—that the strictest uniformity may be observed throughout the whole army they are not to practice a single manoeuver without his directions nor any method different from it any alteration or innovation will again plunge the army into that contrarity and confusion from which it is indeavouring to amend. The hours of exercise are also to be exactly attended to by each Brigade for which—that no difference may arrise in account of watches, * * * attention is to be added to the Order of the 1st April last, for * * * them by that of the Adjutant Genl ———.

The Commander in Chief requests the Brigadiers & Officers Commanding Brigades will see that these Orders are strictly complyed with, hopeing we shall not slip the golden oppertunity which now presents its self of disciplineing the army and that each Brigade will vie with each other in arriveing at the highest and earliest pitch of excellency. For the sake of decency the Genl hopes that the Commanding Officers of Regiments will order their necessaries to be hid with boughs or hurdles—the last tho more troublesome at first will allways serve as they can easyly

[11] Brigadier General James M. Varnum of Rhode Island.

[12] Brigadier General Lachlan McIntosh of Georgia.

[13] Major Elnathan Haskell of Massachusetts.

[14] Brig. General John Paterson of Massachusetts.

be removed—stricter attention is Requested to the Order 15th last March respecting hides.

	C	S	S	C	P
for Guard . . .	1.	–	1.	1.	6
Weeks Comm[d] . .	–	1.	0.	0.	2
Muhlenburgs . .	–	–	–	1.	9
Court Martial . .	2.	1.	–	–	–
	3.	2.	1.	2.	17

Head Quarters May 5 1778.

Brigadier to morrow Poor F. O. Colo[l] Nagle[15] & Maj[r] Gilman. Brigade Major Seely[16] Inspector from Weedons Brigade.

Aaron Ogden[17] Esq[r] is appointed Brigade Major in General * * * Brigade and is to be obeyed and Respected as such.

Mr. Davis Bevan is appointed by the Quarter Master ——— superinting the Artificers and to Deliver out boards plank &c in future. Therefore, when boards or planks are wanting or Artificers are necessary to do any Jobs in the army, an Order signed by a General Officer or Officers Commanding Brigades or Brigade Quarter Masters and derected to Mr. Bevan at Sullivans Bridge will be duly attended to. If their are any Comb makers in the Army the Brigadiers and Officers Commanding Brigades are desired to make a return of them to the Adjutant General. A Flag goes into Philadelphia next fryday. At a Gen[l] Court Martial whereof Col[o] Tyler was President at the Gulph Mills May 2, '78, Jn[o] Maneld a Soldier in Colonel Henry Jackson's[18] Regiment Tryed for desertion from his Post whilst on Centry and unanimously found guilty of a Breach of Article the 1st Section 6 & Article the 6 Section 13 of the articles of war and unanimously Sentenced to be hanged by the neck till he is Dead. At a Brigade Court

[15] Col. Geo. Nagel of Pennsylvania.

[16] Major Isaac Seeley of Pennsylvania.

[17] Aaron Ogden of New Jersey.

[18] Col. Henry Jackson of Massachusetts. The Virginia Historical Society possesses many of his letters and other papers.

Martial whereof Colonel Becker was President Ap' 24, '78 Thomas Hartnel a soldier in the 2 Pennsylvania Regiment tryed for deserting to the Enimy found Guilty and unanimously Sentanced to be hanged by the neck till he is Dead. his Excellency the Commander in Chiéf approves the foregoing Sentences. The General Court Martial whereof Colonel Tyler was Presidant is disolved.

	S	C	P
for Guard	1.	–	6
W Command . . .			3
Muhlenburgs . . .	1.	1.	10
	2.	1.	19

After General Orders

May 5 1778.

* It haveing pleased the almighty Ruler of the Universe Propitiously to defend the Cause of the United American States and finally by Raising us up a powerfull friend amongst the Princes of the Earth to establish our Liberties & Independance upon lasting foundations—it becomes us to set apart a day for greatfully acknowledging the Divine Goodness, & Celebrating the important event which we owe to his benign interposition —the several Brigades are to assemble for that purpose at 9 O'Clock tomorrow morning when their Chaplains will Communicate the Inteligence contained in the Pennsylvania Gazette of the 2 Instant, and offer a thanks given and deliver a discourse suitable to the occasion—at half after ten o'Clock a Cannon will be fired which is to be a signal for the men to be under arms. The Brigade Inspectors will then inspect their dress and arms, form the Battilions according to the instructions given them, and announce to the Commanding officer of Brigade that the Battilions are formed—the Brigadier or Commandants will then appoint the Field Officers to Command the Battilions after which Battilions will be ordered to load and Ground their arms—at

* On February 6, 1778, France made treaties of friendship and commerce and of defensive alliance with the United States, and in March formally communicated to England her treaties with America.

half after eleven a second Cannon will be fired as a signal for the march, upon which the several Brigades will begin their march, by wheeling to the Right by Platoons, and proceed by the nearest way to the left of their ground in the new Position, this will be pointed out by the Brigade Inspectors, a third signal will be given upon which their will be a discharge of 13 Cannon, when the 13th * * a runing fire of the Infantry will begin on the right of * * * , & Continuing thro out the whole frunt line—it will then be taken up on the left of 2d line and Continue to the Right—upon a signal Given the whole army will Huzza long live the King of France. The Artillery then begin again and fires 13 Rounds this will be succeeded by a second General discharge of Musketry in runing fire—Huzza and long live the Friendly Europion Powers—then the last discharge of 13 Pieces of Artillery will be given, followed by a General runing fire & Huzza to the American States. their will be no exercise in the morning and the dayly guards will not Parade till after the Feu de Joye is finished—when the Brigade Majors will march them out to the Grand Parade, the Adjutants then tell off their Battalions with 8 Platoons and the Commanding Officers re-conduct them to their Camps marching from the left. Maj^{r} Genl Lord Sterling will Command on the Right—the Marquis De La Fayette on the left—and Baron De Calb the 2d Line—each Major General will Conduct the first Brigade of his Command to its Ground. The other Brigades will be conducted by their Commanding officers in seperate Columns, the post of each Brigade will be pointed out by the Baron Stubins[19] Aids. Maj^{r} Walker will attend Ld Sterling, Maj^{r} Duponso the Marquis De La Fayette & ——— Linfant, the Baron De Calb—the line is to be formed ——— Interval of a foot between the Files. Each man is to have a Jill of Rum, the Quarter Masters of the several Brigades are to apply to Adjutant General for an Order on the Commissary of Military Stores for the number of Blank Cartridges that may be wanted.

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[19] Baron Von Steuben.

Head Quarters Valley Forge May 6 1778.

	S	S	C	P
Detail for Guard . .	1.	1.	–	5
Muhlenburgs . . .	–	–	1.	9
	1.	1.	1.	14

Head Quarters May 7th 1778.

Brigadier to morrow Muhlenburg—F. O. Colo Farmer[20] & Maj[r] Varnom.

Brigade Major Tynechie Inspector from Muhlenburgs.

Brigadier Maxwell Colo Broadhead[21] Colo[l] Bruger L[t] Col[o] Sherman[22] L[t] Colo Haskell Maj[r] Hopkins & Major Porter.

The Detachment to be on the Grand parade this evening at 4 O'Clock—12 Captains 24 subs 24 serjeants, 24 Corporals, 4 Drums & fifes & 576 Privates to be paraded this afternoon prepaired for a weeks Command—two light field pieces are to be attached to this Command, Colo Vanskykers Regiment will mount the Piquet at Cuckolds town till further orders.

W[m] Barber[23] Fsq[r] is appointed A. D. C. to Maj[r] Gen[l] Lord Sterling Vice ——— Williams resigned and is to be respected accordingly.

The Hono Congress have been pleased by a resolution of the 3 February last to require all officers as well Civell as Military holding Commissions under them to take and subscribe the following Oath or Affirmation according to the Circumstances of the Parties:

I do acknowledge the united States of America to be free Independant & Soverign States and declair the people thereof owe no allegiance or obediance to George the 3d of Great Britain, and I renounce refuse and abjure any allegiance to him and I do swear (or Affirm) that I will to the utmost of my power support maintain and defend the said United States

[20] Probably Col. Lewis Farmer of Pennsylvania.

[21] Col. Daniel Broadhead of Pennsylvania.

[22] Lt. Col. Isaac Sherman of Connecticut.

[23] Maj. Wm. Barber of New Jersey.

against the said King George the 3d his heirs and successors and his and their abettors assistants and adherants and will serve the said United State in the office of ——— which I now hold with fidelity, according to my best skill and understanding.

Sworn to before me at ———.

In order to accomplish this very interesting and essential work as early as possible. The following Officers are to administer the oath and give Certificates to Officers of the Division or Brigade and Corps set against their names, including the Staff—Maj^{r} Genl Ld Sterling, Marquis De Là Fayette, to those of Woodfords[24] and Scotts[25] Brigades. Baron De Calb to those of Glovers and Learnards Brigades, Brig^{r} McIntosh to those of the North Carolina Brigades, Brig^{r} Genl Maxwell to those of his own Brigade, Brigadier General Knox to those of the Artillery in Camp and Officers of Military Stores, Brigadier Genl Poor to those of his own Brigade, Brigadier Genl Varnum to those of his own and Huntingtons Brigades, Brig^{r} Genl Patterson to those of his own brigade, Brig^{r} Waine to those of the 1st & 2d Pensylvania brigades, Brigadier Muhlenburg to those of his own and Weedons brigades. Printed copies of the oath will be immediately lodged in the hands of the Major and Brigadier Generals to facilitate the business, the Genl administering the oaths will keep a duplicate of the same and to grant Certificates when it is made—in the beginning of the oath, the Names, Rank and Corps of the party makeing it are to be inserted, the duplicate of the oath and Certificate is to be returned to head Quarters by the Generals who will also keep those respecting the officers of each Regiment by themselves, that an arraingment of the whole may be made with greater ease and accuracy. Major General Green is to administer the same oath and grant the same Certificate to the officers of his department. The Commissary of Provisions both Issuing and purchaseing and to the Commissary of Forage and his deputies, besides which he is to administer to the said Officers respectively the following oath and to grant duplicate Certificates, I ——— ——— do swear (or Affirm) that I will faithfully truly and impartially execute the Office of ———

[24] Brigadier General William Woodford of Virginia.

[25] Brigadier General Charles Scott of Virginia.

to which I am appointed and render a true account when theirunto required of all publick monies by me received or expended and of all Stores and other Effects to me intrusted which belongs to the united States, and will in all respects discharge the trust reposed in me with Justice and integrity to the best of my skill and understanding. Sworn to by me this day of ——— 1778.

The Commander in Chief takes occation to proclaim Pardon to all prisoners whatsoever, now in confinement wether in the Provost or any other Place: this he is induced to do from a desire that the influence of our prosperity may be as extencive as possible and from an unwillingness of those who merit punishment rather than favour shoud be excluded from the benefit of an event so interesting to mankind as that which has lately happened in the affairs of America. He hopes the indulgence will not be abused but will excite gratitude in all those who are objects of it, and produce a change of Conduct and an abhorrence of every Practice inconsistant with the duty they owe their Country. The Commander in Chief takes perticular pleasure in acquainting the army that their Conduct Yesterday afforded him the highest satisfaction, the exactness and order with which their movements were performed is a pleasing evidence of the progress they are making in Military improvements, and an earnest of the perfectness to which they will shortly arrive with a Continuance of that laudible Zeal and emulation which so happily prevails. The General at the same time presents his thanks to Baron Stuben and the Gentlemen acting under him for the Indefatigable exertions of the dutys of their office, the good effect of which are allready so apparent, and for the care, activity & propriety manifested in conducting the Bussiness of yesterday.

Head Quarters Vally Forge May 8 1778.

Brigadier Gen[l] to morrow Patterson, F. O. L[t].
Colonel Syme & Major Pauling.
Brigade Major Marvin.
Inspector from Maxwell.

	S	C	P
For Guard	1.	–	5
Gen[l] Muhlenburgs . . .	1.	1.	9

Head Quarters Vally Forge May 9 1778.

Brigadier to Morrow Waine F. O. Colonel.
Selia & Lt Col^{l} Gray.
Brigade Major Johnson.
Inspector from late Conways.

The hours appointed for the exercise of the Troops having been changed makes it necessary to alter the hours appointed for the Drumers to practice which will for the future be from 5 to 6 in the morning & from 4 to 5 in the afternoon, any Drumer that shall be found practiceing at any other time than the above mentioned shall be severely punished.

The Adjutants of the several Regiments are to pay perticular attention to this order as they will be answerable for the execution of it. The use of the drums are as signals to the army and if every Drumer is allowed to beat at their pleasure the intention is intirely distroyed as it will be impossibe to distinguish wheter thay are beating for their own pleasure or for a signal for the Troops.

The Congress has been pleased to appoint Baron Stuben Inspector General with the rank of Major General and the Commander in Chief being invested with power to appoint the Inspector and Brigade Inspectors he Continues in Office those who have allready bin nominated and appointed—The languid progress of the essential works of defence which have bin traced by the Engineers gives the Commander in Chief real concern—The calls upon those officers who superintend them to use their utmost exertions to have them Completed without loss of time—At a General Court Martial whereof Colo^{l} Febeger was Presidant May 5 78 Robert Anderson late Waggon Master in the Marquis Division Tryed for selling a Riffle marked U. S. found guilty and sentanced to redeem the Riffle and return it to the first Pensylvania Regiment to which the person who lately had it in possession belonged, approved and ordered to take place. At the same Court L^{t} McDonold of the 3d Pensylvania Regiment Tryed for absenting himself from his Reg^{t} without the concent of his Commanding Officer—upon mature Conciderration of the Charge and Evidences the Court are of opinion that the Prisoners Justifycation is sufficiant & acquit him of the

the Charge exhibited against him—The Commander in Chief confirms the opinion of the Court & orders L^t McDonold to be released from his arrest.

	S	C	P
for Guard	1.	–	5
Genl Muhlenburg	–	1.	9
	1.	1	14

Head Quarters Vally Forge May 10 1778.

Brigadier to morrow Poor.
F. O. Lt Colonel Starr[26] & Maj^r Nicholas.
Brigade Major Minnis[27]
Inspector from Huntingtons[28] Brigade.

	C	S	S	C	P
for Guard	–	1.	1.	1.	5
W Command with 2 days Pro^n		–	–	1.	1
W Command . .	–	–	1.	1.	6
Genl Muhlenburg .	–	–	1.	1.	9
		1.	3.	4.	21

D. O. May 10 1778.

The Gentlemen Officers of Genl Greens division are requested to attend at Genl Muhlenburgs Quarters to morrow and the day after in the forenoon to take the oath as proscribed by a Resolve of Congress and the General Orders of the 7 Instant.

Peter Muhlenburg Brigadier
Commadant.

Head Quarters May 11 1778.

Brig^r to morrow McIntosh, F. O, Colo^l

[26] Lt Col. Josiah Starr of Connecticut.

[27] Probably Callowhill Minnis of Va.

[28] Brig. General Jabez Huntington of Connecticut.

Parker[29] & Lt Colo^{l} Nevell[30]

Brig. Major Claybourn.

The Inspector from Varnoms Brigade.

A Court of Inquiry to set to morrow morning at 9 O'Clock at Genl Varnoms hutt to take into Consideration a Complaint exhibited by Colonel Green[31] against Colonel Steward Brig^{r} Genl Varnom is appointed Presidant Colonels Grayson[32] & Bigalow[33] Lt Colonels Wisingfield & Brily and Major Ward will attend as members.

The Genl Officers are desired to attend at head Quarters to morrow at 11 O'Clock A. M. that they may take the oath appointed by Congress in the Resolution of 3^{d} of Feb'y last, and was published in Genl Orders of the 7 instant. At a Genl C. M. whereof Colonel Febiger was President Ap^{l} 28 1778 Capt Thomas Lucas[34] of Colonel Malcolmns Regiment Tryed for assuming the Rank of Captain when a Lieutenant 2^{ndly} for discharging an Enlisted Soldier and also for receiving a sum of money for so doing thirdly for returning the said Soldier deserted in the Muster Roll after discharging of him found Guilty of the Charges exhibited against him being Breaches of Article the 5. 18 Section & 2d Article of the 3d Section also of the 5 Article and 5 Section of the Articles of war and sentanced to be discharged the Service—Also Lt Barron of Colonel Wigglesworths[35] Regiment Tryed for strikeing Lt Page & 2^{ndly} for un Gentlemanlike behaviour, found Guilty of the Charges exhibited against him and Sentanced to be Cashiered and rendered incapable of ever serving in the United States in a Military Capacity The Commander in Chief approves the sentance & orders it to take place immediately. At the same Court Capt Morrison[36] of the 1st Jersey Regiment tryed for selling as substitutes Men who were

[29] Probably Col. Richard Parker of Va.

[30] Lt. Col. John Neville of Va.

[31] Col. John Green of Va.

[32] Col. William Grayson of Va.

[33] Col. Timorthy Bigelow of Massachuetts,

[34] Capt. Thomas Lucas of New York.

[35] Col. Edward Wigglesworth of Massachusetts.

[36] Isaac Morrison of New Jersey.

deemed incapable by an express Law of the State of being such & for selling Soldiers as substitutes who were before inlisted for the common bounty, upon Consideration of the Charges and evidence the Court are unanimously of opinion that Captain Morrison is Guilty but as he does not appear to have been actuated by self interested. as his actions which are most centured have arose from a desire of promoting the good of the Service the Court determins that he does not merit censure. The Gen[l] Confirms the Sentence, at the same time he cannot forbare remarking that the practice of selling Soldiers as substitutes is an abuse of the highest nature & pregnant with the most pernicious consequences tho their is every Reason to hope in the present Instance that it did not proceed from selfish Pecuniary motives yet it is in its self of so daingerous attendancy and so inconsistent with every Rules of propriety that he cannot but merit the severest reprimand Captain Morrison is releaved from his arrest. At the same Court by adjournment Ap[l] 29, 78 Adjutant Thomson of the 9 Pensy[a] Regiment tryed for refusing to come when sent for by Major Nicholas & 2d for treating Major Nicholas after comeing to him with ill language acquited of the first Charge but found Guilty of the second & Sentenced to be privately reprimanded by the Officer Commanding the Brigade. The General remits the Sentance from a Consideration that the Conduct observed towards Mr. Thomson must exceedingly wound his fealings and excited him to a warmth of expression for which he was Censured. Adjutant Thomson is released from his arrest.

	S	C	P
for Guard	1.	0.	5
Week Command . . .	–	–	2
In Guards	–	1.	9
	1.	1.	16

Head Quarters May 12, 1778

Brigadier to Morrow Muhlenburg
F. O. L[t] Co[l] Bedlam & Major Murphey
Brig[e] Major McCormack
Inspector from McIntoshes Brigade
The Court Martial whereof Col[o] Febeger was President is

disolved & another Ordered to set to morrow at the usual place whereof Colon[l] Bowman[37] is appointed President a Captain from each Brigade is to attend as members. Elnathan Haskell Esquire is appointed Brigade Major in Gen[l] Pattersons Brigade Vice Major McClure and is to be obeyed as such.

	S	S	C	P
Detail for Guard . .	–	–	–	5
Weeks Command . .	–	–	–	3
In Guards . . .	–	–	1.	9

Head Quarters May 13 1778.

Brigadier Gen to morrow Patterson.

F. O. Colonel Gibson[38] & L[t] Colonel Ball[39]

Brig[e] Major McKinney.

The Inspector from Woodfords Brigade.

Taken up the 11 May two Stray Horses one 14 hands high a light Gray the other a dark Bay about 12 hands high the one 6 or 7 Years old the other 9 or 10 the owners are desired to prove their property, pay Charges and fetch them away from Anthony Richards Charles Town Chester County.

	S	S	C	P
Detail for Guard . .	1.	1.	1.	5
fortnights Command . .	–	1.	0.	1
In Guards . . .	–	1.	1.	9
fatigue	–	1.	0.	17
Quarter Guards . . .	–	–	1.	6
	1.	4.	3.	38

R. O. May 14 1778.

A Regimental Court Martial to set to day for the Tryal of all the Prisoners that may be brought before them

Capt Crump President

Members

L[t] Campbell — L[t] Rudder

L[t] Piper — L[t] Best

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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[37] Col. Abraham Bowman of Virginia.

[38] George and John Gibson were Colonels in Revolution from Virginia.

[39] Lt. Col. Burgess Ball of Virginia.